

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-06 OES-07
SP-02 SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /121 W
-----058884 200859Z /15

R 200607Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6853

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EINV, SU, ENRG, PDEV
SUBJECT: VISIT TO CHEVRON OPERATIONS

1. ACCOMPANIED BY MY WIFE, I VISITED OIL EXPLORATION OPERATIONS
BEING CARRIED OUT BY CHEVRON OIL COMPANY IN UPPER NILE AND
SOUTHERN KORDOFAN PROVINCES ON MARCH 17 AND 18.

2. ON THURSDAY MORNING WE FLEW DIRECTLY FROM KHARTOUM TO
BENTIU ON THE SOUTH BANK OF THE BAHR AL GHAZAL. THERE THE
COMPANY IS ESTABLISHING A LOGISTICS FACILITY INCLUDING AN
AIR STRIP AND A LARGE BARGE FERRY TO CARRY FORTY-TON TRUCKS
NORTHWARD ACROSS THE RIVER TO DELIVER SUPPLIES ON A SIXTY
KILOMETER ROAD (BUILT BY CHEVRON) TO THE "UNITY" DRILLING SITE.
I WAS MET AT THE AIR STRIP BY THE ASSISTANT DISTRICT
COMMISSIONER WHO PRESENTED ME WITH A SPEAR-NO TOY, IT
HAS A VERY SHARP AND WICKED POINT.

3. WE HAD A CHANCE TO WALK THROUGH THE TOWN OF BENTIU
WHICH STRUCK US AS EXTREMELY POOR AND STILL NOT RECOVERED
FROM THE RAVAGES OF CIVIL WAR. COMPANY PERSONNEL SAID THAT
THE LOCAL POPULATION WAS EXTREMELY FRIENDLY AND TRUSTING. WE
HAD A SHORT RIDE UP THE BAHR AL GHAZAL IN THE BARGE. THIS
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WAS REAL TROPICAL AFRICA-THE RIVER BANKS LINED BY PAPYRUS
GROWTH, BEAUTIFUL WATER LILIES AND (UGH) DESTRUCTIVE WATER
HYACINTH. WE SAW LOVELY LITTLE BIRDS SKITTERING AROUND ON
TOP OF THE LILY PADS, A LIZARD, BUT NO RPT NO CROCODILES.

4. WE THEN DROVE BY A FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLE TO "UNITY".
ON THE WAY WE PASSED THROUGH A NUMBER OF NUER VILLAGES

WHOSE INHABITANTS CAME OUT TO GREET US WITH FRIENDLY WAVES.
WITHOUT A CHANGE OF CULTURE HABITS ON THE PART OF NUER MALES,
I FEAR THAT SUDAN'S INFANT TEXTILE INDUSTRY WILL NOT GET VERY FAR.
AT PRESENT NUER TRIBESMEN OFFER NO MARKET WHATSOEVER FOR CLOTH.
WE ALSO ENCOUNTERED AN OSTRICH.

5. AT "UNITY" SITE DRILLING HAS NOW REACHED ABOUT 8500 FEET.
TEST RESULTS THUS FAR HAVE BEEN AMBIGUOUS BUT CHEVRON IS
PRESSING ON.

6. FROM "UNITY" WE FLEW TO AN AREA WHERE EXTENSIVE
GEOPHYSICAL WORK IS BEING CARRIED ON. MAGNITUDE OF THIS
EFFORT IS MOST IMPRESSIVE. IT INVOLVES DRAWING LINES ON THE
GROUND, SOMETIMES AS LONG AS 150 KILOMETERS AND LOCATING
THEM ON A MAP AS PRECISELY AS REFERENCE DATA, INCLUDING
SATELLITE INFORMATION, PERMITS. THESE LINES ARE THEN
BULLDOZED. HOLES ARE DRILLED THIRTY FEET DEEP AT PRECISE
LOCATIONS AT THE RATE OF THREE HOLES PER TWO HUNDRED METERS.
DYNAMITE CHARGES ARE THEN SET OFF IN THE HOLES AND THE SEISMIC
REACTION RECORDED ON VISUAL INDICATORS AND MAGNETIC TAPE.
THE TAPE IS SENT TO HOUSTON WHERE, BY COMPUTER, IT IS
PROCESSED INTO AN AMAZINGLY ACCURATE CHART OF THE
GEOLOGIC FORMATIONS UNDERNEATH. THESE GEOPHYSICAL EXPERTS
LIVE UNDER THE MOST DIFFICULT CONDITIONS AS THEY MUST MOVE
THEIR CAMP SITES EVERY FEW DAYS. NEVERTHELESS, MORALE
WAS HIGH AND THEY ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THEIR WORK.
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-----059365 200859Z /17

R 200607Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6854

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7. WE NEXT FLEW TO "MAY 25" DRILLING SITE WHERE A SECOND OIL DRILLING RIG IS BEING ASSEMBLED. PRESENTLY TWO WATER DRILLING RIGS OPERATED BY SUDANESE GOVERNMENT UNDER CONTRACT WITH CHEVRON ARE DRILLING WELLS TO PROVIDE LARGE WATER SUPPLY NEEDED FOR OIL DRILLING OPERATIONS. THE OIL RIG LIES ON THE GROUND LOOKING LIKE A GIANT ERECTOR SET WITH A GOOD MANY MISSING PIECES. ALL THE PIECES HAVE NOW ARRIVED IN THE SUDAN BUT A GOOD MANY HAVE YET TO BE BROUGHT TO THE DRILLING SITE. A CURIOUS CROWD OF LOCAL ONLOOKERS WAS GATHERED AT THE EDGE OF THE PROJECT. THEIR DRESS WAS MIXED, SOME IN WESTERN SAFARI SUITS, OTHERS IN ARAB-STYLE GALABIAS, AND STILL OTHERS IN JUST SHORTS. ALL OF THEM, HOWEVER, CARRIED WICKED LOOKING SPEARS. I WAS TOLD THAT THEY WERE NOMADIC CATTLE HERDERS WAITING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF

A POSSIBLE NEW WATER SOURCE. APPARENTLY AT THE "BARAKA" WELL (CHEVRON'S FIRST WHICH HAS NOW BEEN ABANDONED) THE NOMADIC HERDERS COMPETED AMONG THEMSELVES SO BITTERLY FOR WATER THAT CHEVRON HAD TO CALL IN THE SUDANESE MILITARY TO MAINTAIN ORDER.

8. OUR LAST STOP FOR THE DAY WAS A MUGHLAD IN SOUTHERN KORDOFAN. MUGHLAD IS THE RAILHEAD SUPPORTING THE CHEVRON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPERATION AND THE COMPANY HAS BUILT A LARGE WAREHOUSE THERE. THE LOCAL INHABITANTS ARE MAINLY ARABIC-SPEAKING BAGGARA.

9. THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER THERE HAD LAID ON A PROGRAM OF BAGGARA FOLK DANCING WHICH WE WITNESSED AFTER DINNER. I HAVE ALREADY CONFESSED TO THE DEPARTMENT MY LACK OF ARDOR FOR FOLK DANCING. MY EXPERIENCE IN MUGHLAD SERVED TO REINFORCE THIS ATTITUDE. THE DRUMMING WAS QUITE GOOD. THE DANCING CONSISTED LARGELY OF PEOPLE STANDING IN PLACE, OCCASIONALLY SHUFFLING THEIR FEET IN A RHYTHM WHICH ESCAPES ME. BUT THE FRIENDLINESS AND EAGERNESS OF THE DANCERS AND TOWNSPEOPLE TO SHAKE HANDS MADE UP FOR IT. MY WIFE WAS PRESENTED WITH AN OSTRICH EGG AND A WALKING STICK.

10. THE NEXT MORNING WE WENT THROUGH THE TOWN, INSPECTED THE WAREHOUSE, AND VISITED A NEARBY GEOPHYSICAL HEADQUARTERS. WE THEN EMPLANED FOR KHARTOUM ARRIVING AT MID-DAY ON FRIDAY, MARCH 17.

11. THIS WAS A MOST USEFUL TRIP. IT WAS A GRAPHIC DEMONSTRATION OF THE ABILITY OF AMERICAN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE TO GET

THINGS DONE IN DIFFICULT AND REMOTE AREAS. THIS HAS MANY
POSITIVE ASPECTS BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, CAN ONLY INVITE
INVIDIOUS COMPARISONS WITH THE PACE AT WHICH OUR AID
PROGRAM IS GETTING OFF THE GROUND. EQUALLY IMPRESSIVE IS
THE GOOD WILL WHICH CHEVRON HAS CREATED AMONG LOCAL
PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THEY ARE OPERATING IN A
POLITICALLY DELICATE AREA, ON BOTH SIDES OF THE SHADOWY
SHIFTING LINE THAT DIVIDES MOSLEM AND NON-MOSLEM
SUDANESE. THEY ARE HANDLING THE SITUATION EXTREMELY WELL.
BERGUS

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